Howland Wood - Personal

Comparette, Thomas Louis
[Superintendant, U.S. Mint
Philadelphia, PA]

1906?-1913?

My dear Wood:- I see by your letter just received that I did not answer your questions in full. The story of the twenties is about as follows:-

The first order was to strike 7000 and then before the job was completed the order was increased to 8000. That

number was made and delivered. About one month subsequently when these coins had jumped to a high premium and in hopes largely of discouraging the traffic an additional $3,500 more struck; and this latter number was distributed among the sub-treasuries Jan. 17th or 18th. Thus the whole number made foots up 11,500, but as before the number I impu-

for pieces returned from Washington, and those eliminated here for the same reason, brings the number issued officially down to 11,250. That is the number issued according to the authority of the coiner. Thus you ought to have the bottle of champagne from Joe, or whatever the stake was.

As to which is the obverse of the new coin, or of any modern

coin. That is a matter that must be looked at from an historical point of view. In the case of the Greek coinages these terms are often used wrongly as in modern coinages the terms are employed conventionally, as you know. The side struck by the lower dies should really be designated the obverse if we are to retain the true meaning of the terms. Careful students generally observe this in dealing with ancient coins. But since the upper die usually carries the head and is thus regarded as the obverse. Certainly the eagle should still be regarded

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

April 20th. 1906.

Mr. Howland Wood,

Brookline, Mass.,

Dear sir:-I was very much gratified with your letter of the 14th. inst. I like the direction your interests in the subject takes; too much in the way of numismatics is without depth.

As to this Cabinet I wish to say that it has wakened up, and if it is not fully aroused yet, it soon will be. I found the thing dead and decadent and, what is worse, a disposition in some quarters to inter the institution rather than to apply a restorative. I'll not go into details; you could not believe the story of conditions here if I were to relate them. Sometime I hope to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance and then we can review the history and needs of numismatics and coin cabinets.

I shall probably respond favorably to your kind invitation to unite with the Association, but I wish to defer the matter for a few days. I wish to learn a little more than I now know about the activities of the organization. I do not wish to become identified with too many organizations that do not engage in active work. This is not to be taken unkindly; you certainly know what I mean and will surely agree with me.

To get acquainted with Numismatists is just what I desire very much to do, and to that end I have in mind to do some lecturing next Autumn and Winter before the various societies, should there be a desire for such work. Perhaps you will be able to call attention of societies wishing to promote the subject, to that method of doing so.

Very truly yours,

A. Comparetta

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

Philadelphia, Pa. Oct. 14th 1907.

Mr. Howland Wood,

Brookline, Mass.

My dear Mr. Wood:-I have your letter and the bibliography and I want to thank you for both. I am particularly glad to have the fine list of books and articles, and it is not hard to see from the titles that it is a fine list. I shall set about getting some of them at once. But I can say very frankly that I hesitate to enter far into the inexhaustible field of oriental numismatics, because I see that it possesses great attractiveness and once started I am afraid that I might be drawn too far from the fields where I am best qualified to work, divide my time and energies and end up with the net result of doing little or nothing of value. It is absolutely foolish, as you well know, for a man to try to cover the whole field: the De Saulcys and the Lenormants are few in this world.

What is needed of course is additional funds, more room, and then an increase in the staff, not however of political appointees whose abilities reach almost their limit in signing the payroll, but by adding one or two men who could take definite fields and conduct the activities therein. Such is the ideal I have in mind and expect to realize it, too. Who knows but that we may some day be "partners in crime"! If signs count for anything the Cabinet is going to get better treatment from this next Congress.

I shall remember your request regarding the new Eagles; and as

soon as they are to be had I will forward you one.

As to scientific Numismatics, I believe that we can do something to advance that highly desirable movement but it will come slowly; and that is the greater reason to work and be patient.

When you were here had I procured authority to purchase a goodly lot of books? The list of about twenty volumes will include some of the best standard works: There will be one work on the Japanese coinages. One might think that it ought to be easy for me to procure books here but it is not: it serves political purposes better "to eat up the Contingent Funds" of the Mint by appointing ward healers to workless jobs just before election. Some time I hope to see a fairly decent working library here and also a place for outsiders of approved training and worthy interests to work and make use of the library and the coins.

Very sincerely yours,

T. L. Comparette

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

October 17th 1907.

My dear Mr. Wood:-I return the coin. It is a coin of Aspendus in Pamphylia and bears one of the well known countermarks so often found on the satrapal coins of Lycia and Pamphylia. For that compare the Brit. Mus. Cat. Lycia etc. p.97, No.26 and the reference to Babelon, a work that we do not have here but soon shall have.

I am amused at your experience with your new member. I am afraid that such is the spirit in many who are pursuing the subject in this country. I now feel inclined to class Olcutt with the ruck too. He sent me his catalogue of coins for sale. I wrote him on the subject of trying to pull the whole business out of the mud--no reply. I'll wager that if I were to write him about buying some of his coins he'd answer. If he is going to turn dealer I'll not patronize him much more. I feel like discouraging that tendency.

Will Dr. Marvin get out the next number of the Journal? I have a review of one of Dattari's recent articles in the Rivista nearly completed and if he is to get out the next number I will try to get it done in time for him to use it if he'd like. I had thought of employing it in a report on numismatic literature which I have had some notion of incorporating in a sort of bulletin to be issued in January.

The Engravers are just making the dies for the Twenty from

the latest and perhaps last modification of the design. Some of the earlier ones will probably be issued, but not many. I shall try to obtain the privilege of selling ~~the~~ specimens of the first die for the benefit of the Cabinet; they would find ready sale at $25 and perhaps more for the design is very beautiful and in the high relief would prove very attractive to many.

I should have stated more fully that the coin you sent is a Stater struck on the Babylonic standard and weighs 167.5 grains or 5.5 grains short of the normal weight of 173 Grains. It is worth approximately $4.00.

Very sincerely yours,

T.L. Comparette.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

October 19th 1907.

My dear Mr. Wood:-You say that you have Villaret, La Numismatique Japonaise. I have been wanting to consult that very work for some time but could not get hold of it and it will be some time before it comes to hand. I have a few coins here said to be genuine early Japonese and I want to learn their proper denominations. You may know them. There are seven of them and on the accompanying slip of paper the various weights of them are given, also the general outline of the largest of them. The rest, as you see from the statement of the weights, are much smaller; and the shape is round and flat, but thick.

I have given a rough sketch of the design that is found on all but the smallest of them. The design above the line is about the sort of thing that occurs on Nos. 2 to 6. On the large piece it is the same but the hatchet shaped thing below the line forms the lower portion of the design and the characters [illegible] are omitted.

I should be glad to learn, if you can tell me, just what the denominations of them are. I thank you in advance for the kindness.

Very sincerely yours,

A. L. Comparette

Confidential, but not inspired from higher up.

Mr. Howland Wood
Brookline, Mass.

Dear Mr. Wood:

I do not know how the new coin appeals to you and what position you are going to take in the discussion of it that is now raging. To one thing I beg leave to invite your attention: and that is the effect that opposition from all parts may have not only on the fate of the new piece but on any future effort to improve our coinage. As you must certainly know, the President's task is a most thankless one; the character of the coin does not enter into the question; it would be assailed in the same way no matter how beautiful it might be if it happened to be at variance with what the people are ~~habituated~~ accustomed to. It would be accepted with acclaim no matter difference how ugly, if it were along the line of the old coins.

Does it not strike you that the friends of numismatics, and the numismatic societies ought to take a calm view of the matter and, even if the coin does not just strike their individual fancy, welcome the effort and demand that it be kept up until all the rest of the series has been similarly treated? This is but one; the others might be more to your personal liking. But if we down this one we cannot expect further efforts.

The mottoless piece will be strongly assailed by religionists. Many of us consider that an unessential; why not meet the attack?

If you are in favor of better coins why not busy yourself just a little to parry the opposition. I think the President who has shown himself friendly to a neglected art deserves our support.

Sincerely yours

H. L. Comparelli

My dear Wood:-I was glad to receive your letter this morning and the inclosed clipping for which I thank you very much. If in the next meeting of your society the new coin comes up for discussion and my article with it you might save me from damnation by giving the information that what I say anent the date of the description of the bald eagle is drawn from a supposedly reliable source.I now understand that it is not accurate.In fact I have come to distrust the whole tribe of ornithologists. I have ascertained,and you will find out the same if you will consult Audubon's plates, that St.Gaudens's conception of the leg-feathers is correct.

The twenty will not appear before sometime in January.

Along with your letter came one from Olcott,burdened with the most plausible of apologies;they are accepted. He is in favor of a more dignified numismatic Society,and also of a more creditable journal. I am afraid however that O's entry into the class of half collector and half dealer would deprive his name of scientific influence;in fact his questions about the names and addresses of"good collectors" smell of the methods of Simon and Jacob.

Nothing new here but work-and that is not novel.

Sincerely yours,

H.A.Grunthal

P.S.-I did not conclude from your pencil-jests that you were inclined to jeer the young Indian off the boards. Perhaps that look in her face is due to fear of the eagle so near her hair. C.

My dear Mr.Wood:-I assure that I have been on the look-out for what you desire but up to the present time I have not been able to find it. The pieces were all rotten, both the Eagle and the Double Eagle. This is due partly to the incapacity of the engraving department and partly to spite that the designs were prepared by St.Gaudens instead of by themselves.

Just now I cannot get anything, not even the finny tribe. No more are to be struck I now understand and the demand for those that have been issued is so great that all on hand were required to fill outside orders. Just at present I believe that there are none in the Mint except those in the hands of officials and those are for private purposes. Of course I am not sure that there are any so held; but if not then the supply here is entirely exhausted.

The so-called second edition will be the regular issue for circulation. The dies were made some time since but had to be modified hence the delay in issuing them. The statement that the design was reduced in response to the general criticism is newspaper jargon. The die was reduced and some struck off weeks before these high-relief patterns were let out. There will large numbers of the regulars and they will be out within a day or so. The design has been modified in many ways. Besides change of numerals, relief etc there are more rays behind eagle, and several details are made more distinct; this is the result of only a cursory observation. I have not had time, to or rather have not had opportunity to examine them carefully. You see I am a St.Gaudens man. Our engravers are both Englishmen, and good haters; you know the rest.

Sincerly yours,

T. L. Comparette

Later-I may be able to procure a good speimen for you.

C.

know

My dear Wood:-What do you about Pratt, a Boston engraver? I understand that he has submitted a design for the Five Dollar gold piece, another Indian head. The little I learn about the fellow is favorable to his artistic achievements. I have not seen the model so I can not judge him from that. The Engraving Department here at the Mint is cut to the heart by the com issions to outsiders and of course have their knife sharpened for evry man that has favored the President's course. You see the Department is filled with Englishmen, and the head of the business is a regular Johnny Bull, a regular bull-headed, I-know-it-all, you-don't-know-a -damn-thing, variety of the stubborn, snobbish offspring of a beef eating English female. (If you are in doubt about the proper content of any of the above adjectives, see Irving).

Well, the President's last effort or his persistent course in his original effort in the face of the uproar and the cussing has taken out of this crowd the little breath left by the original commission to Saint Gaudens. They thought the pummelling by the press had at once finished Teddy, and in a way restored them to their rightful position as medallic bunglers to the nation--but they little knew our Teddy. They look these days as if they were dieting on cut-nails.

I know but little about Pra tt, nothing except as ~~visitor~~ an exhibitor at some of the various art ex-

hibitions and I am curious to know something about him for these chaps will be sailing into him and I wish to be prepared for the fray.

Of course this communication in regard to the new model is entirely confidential and should remain so until such time as the administration sees fit to make the fact public.

I learned that you were in Phila. last week. It is well that you did not come over this week, for if you had you might have remained here in the form of a mere grease spot. The city has done her worst in heat and humidity and what the Quaker City cannot do no other city need try at-in the matter of roasting your flesh and heating your temper.

I am sorry that I did not see you for I'd like to have a talk with you about several matters.

What a pity about Heath's death! It is a rather hard blow to the society that you nurse and tend. I hope that you will be able to arrange the affairs of the Numismatist satisfactorily; but I suspect that it will be no easy task. Could you not take up the editing of it yourself? If run in a businesslike manner I am inclined to believe that it might net the publisher some income. It appears that the business management of the publication has been too indulgent to patrons for its own prosperity. So Brand said, but of course it was the Doctor's own affair as I am informed that he owned it outright.

What do you know of interest to the body numismatic? A lot of things I dare say. You undoubtedly know all that I do and much more besides. So it is useless for me to tell you anything. Just for curiosity I'd like to know who "Hercules" and "Krase" is or are. He or they have bought the high priced coins last year and recently. Some say J.P.Morgan or son

others guess John T. Morris, of Phila. Perhaps it is the latter, I do not believe that it is the former. The Metropolitan Museum, for which he generally buys things, is not collecting coins, and will not have any in the future. This letter was begun the other day and then left until cooler weather before completing it.

Very sincerely yours

T. L. Comparette

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

January 14th.

My dear Mr.Wood:-I have just asked the Coiner and he informs me that there 11,250 of the high relief twenties struck. That's official;and there is no subterfuge for the sake of getting a good price.

I am sorry to state that they will attempt to issue the Half Eagle and the Quarter Eagle in the designs of the DoubleEagle. I doubt if the devices will prove adaptable to such small pieces. It is a pity that we cannot have special design for those small coins which as you say might be little gems of art. I wonder if we could bring some pressure to bear upon the proper authorities and have some special types made. It ought to be done. I'd conduct a propaganda to have it done but I am so liable to be ca led down;and it is well that I do not have that experience. You see the rotten republican organization of Philadelphia and of Pennsylvania have two or three hands in this Mint;I am an Ohioan,a very nauseous person to this crowd. I have blocked their efforts to decapitate my assistants and appoint their friends,an action that filled full the cup made already bitter by my own appoinment instead of one of their own men who fought for it. You see the situation and the absolute necessity(not so much for my personal benefit as for the good of the Collection whose interests they have always in the years gone by sacrificed ruthlessly for political ends;they kept it saddled for years with a salary list of from ten to fifteen thousand dollars and restricted to a purchasing fund of $300. and often cut off a portion of that amount so that more workingmen-voters could be accommodated with"snaps"just before election.)of my avoiding a faux pas in the estimation of Washington authorities.

Very sincerely yours,
A. Comparette.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

January 10th 1908.

My dear Wood:-I have just received your letter and am going to answer it at once while I have time or rather before I settle down to my day's work.

All that you have heard about the new coins is untrue. The presses are working on them at this very moment, if I am not mistaken, knocking them at out at the rate of eighty per minute. There is nothing in the rumor that the design may be given up. You may bet that the White House bull-dog will not let go of that bone until congress has put a rope around his neck and twisted it up tight. I think that the design wil stay and in all its ungodliness, ~~on it.~~

There were about 12,000 of the high relief twenties struck. The Supt. wants to keep the price up--he got about two hundred of them-see! You might procure one by application to the Treasury Department in Washington. There are some there amd more will ~~soon~~ be transferred at an early date.

The alloy in the twenty is the legal ~~10%~~ 10% of copper; it could not be anything else. The yellowness of the high relief pieces is due to the fact that they required nine blows to bring them up and they were annealed, and pickled in acid between blows to soften them: the process of heating and pickling dissolved a least bit of the copper alloy from the surface and thus left a fine film of pure unalloyed gold on the surface, which gives it the rich yellow appearance. Silver is not used as alloy in any of our coins.

I am sending you the Cents.

So Spinks will publish the new $20! That again accents the fact that we have no good means of publishing numismatic material in this country. The scientific publication of the new coins should have been done in this country. But where would you publish it? The whole matter will be ancient history before the Journal gets out and I doubt if the Numismatist reaches the foreign numismatist. We need a monthly bulletin in which to chronicle the best that concerns the subject in this country, not devoted to newspaper clippings, accounts of sales (some sales), and the trivial balderdash of the hobbyist. We must have it.

If the debate in Congress grows very hot I shall have something more to say, if not in straight defense of the new, surely in offense against the old coins.

Had I not been down with the grippe I should have dropped in on you during the Holidays for I had planned a trip to Boston. As it was I got up just in time to resume work when the limit of my vacation time had been reached.

Very truly yours,

F. Comparette

Philadelphia, Penna. Jan. 21, 1909.

Dear Wood:-I have just received your letter in regard to the American Committee for the International Congress at Brussells in 1910. As I do not receive the Revue Belge I had not seen the notice referred to but I had seen notices elsewhere in regard to that Congress and had already made up my mind to attend it and to present a paper. You are quite correct in concluding that the committees in question are merely honorary and carry no obligations or privileges of consequence with them. Of course if anybody has a paper to offer he should offer it to the programme Committee through the Committee of his country but that is about the extent of their duties as a rule.

I have no doubt but that the American Committe is already as large as it should be and therefore it might not be best to present my name; of course I have no objections to your doing so if you'd like to do so, thinking it best. It is an honor that I'd neither solicit nor decline. Of course I appreciate your kindly purpose in bringing the matter to may attention, and I thank you very sincerely for the courtesy.

I note that you have given in the Numismatist (or rather it is given in the Numismatist, for which you are I believe partly responsible) a resume of Svoromos's perfectly heretical theory of the Mycenaean gold disks and the Homeric talent. The suggestion is indeed in a way interesting, as all such suggestions are, but I cannot see the remotest possibility of satisfactory proof or of even acceptable theory. But of such stuff is science finally made.

Very truly yours,

H. Comfort

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

February 10,1909.

To His August Highness,the Great and Only King of Kings,
the Anointed of Allah,Father of the Faithful(in Numis.),
the All-Powerful Sultan of Brookline,or any other line,

My August sir:-Your scribble is at hand and I am very glad to make immediate reply and inform you that your load of Siamese bird shot is not composed of the smallest in the world,so that you need not brag;and to forestall such conduct es erfreut mir sehr to report that the smallest here tips the balances at 1.65 grains and converted into metric weights that runs pretty close to .107 grams. So there ~~are~~ you are beatten--to a frazzle.

The Assay Commission is here today. Just what variety of asses compose it I am unprepared to say,but we usually have a choice lot.

Our only revenge for their being asses is gotten by serving them with a rotten luncheon here in the Mint. Last year the whole crowd of us was laid out by it. Thus we inflict injury on ourselves to knock them out. I presume Zerbe is here.

Very truly yours,

A. Loring Brouaetta

My dear Wood:-I am just in receipt of your letter full of interesting things. I thank you very much for the address of the Marvin's and for the information about the Journal. I shall write them soon.

What you say about the Journal and the view point of the collectors is all right;but also you must not forget that the Numismatist has that field and the scope of the Journal ought to be a very different one. I do not imagine that the Revue Numismatique or the Chronicle are in very close touch with the collectors of France or England.

So you got separated from your money in New York did you? Why,certainly!What would be the use of New York's boast that she is a money center if she did not scoop in all that came her way? When people come to Philadelphia they generally take money away with them unless they come here to buy coins and meet our friend Harry.So,come to Philadelphia.

Your remarks about Zerbe's perennially recurrent office ambitions greatly amuse me. He is another Bryan with a difference--he is in and can't be got out and Bryan is out and can't get in. I fear that if you drop out,the Association will get a death wound. I mean that. What ought to be done is to make you President.

I thank you for the coins. Your comments anent the jack-ass piece are decidedly apropos.

By the way I wish you would write what you consider a good label for the pieces you sent before. I inclose the envelope so that you will have the necessary

data to refresh your memory. I have increased the number of labels greatly since you were here. People can now get along very well without the help of my ignorant guides, who are more interested in retailing fairy tales about irrelevant matters than they are in gathering some pertinent information about the coins and handing it out in a sensible manner.

Yes, a decided improvement is noticeable in the Numismatist, and has been very apparent for the last several months.

Did I tell you that the dies of the Mormon coinage have come to light? They have; and have passed from private into public possession; and what is still more interesting is that there are dies for one variety hitherto unknown.

As soon as the Lincoln Cent appears I'll forward you some specimens. I have no idea when that will be. The Barber-St.Gaudens act is being again enacted, I understand, and that means delay indefinite. I am inclined to believe that Barber will find that Brenner is no saint, and that McVeagh is not a clerk by training and instinct--which facts may produce the Lincoln cents a little sooner than might otherwise be expected.

I understand that McVeagh is very friendly toward the Cabinet and thinks that it ought to have more money. I am sure therefore that he will be ready to help us whenever he can; he is a man of cultivated tastes and a collector of objets d'art. I hope that not too many will act on the suggestion made in the last number of the Numismatist namely, to write to him and urge the needs of the collection on his attention. He might feel pestered thereby and get soured.

By the way there is a splendid article in the last-but-one number of the NATION on collectors and collect-

ing that is worth perusing and perhaps is worth a reference in the Numismatist. The writer often hits the nail on the head. I think that I shall have to state my views on that subject explicitly some time; for I suspect that some of my friends feel that I am not in sympathy with their interests.

Such is far from the truth. I fully appreciate both their point of view and also (what is not true of very many) I just as fully realize their value to the whole field of numismatics.

But my personal interests are on the scientific side, and I have as good a right to pursue my own natural bent as have they to theirs. One agitation I intend to keep up as long as I can kick, is the recognition of the science in the curricula of some of our leading universities. For, I believe that when that is done the whole subject will assume a new aspect in this country.

Well, I think that I have written all I know and far more than was worth writing; so here I'll stop.

Truly yours,

T. L. Comparette

P.S. As you perceive from the above I handle the writing machine rapidly, not well.

Dear Wood:-I thank you for your good intentions and bad achievements in getting me into the American Committee of the Brussells Congress. If the position involved any work or responsibility I'd take it out on you somehow. To judge from the personal of the various committees it will be a big affair, provided even the members of the committees attend and take an active part.

What we must do now is to get up some creditable papers to be read. And right there arises an important matter-library facilities. Unless it be at Columbia University there is not a good working library of numismatic works in this country; and until that fault is corrected we are not going to have any research work over here that will rise above the plane of mediocrity. I have three or four half finished papers on hand and they are destined to be on hand until I can reach a library where I can have sources and also ascertain just what has already been done.

Now, the other day I wrote the Library of Congress my annual message on this topic and have just received a reply which is no reply, merely information that they are considering the matter of my letter and that they will report in a few days. They have but very little down there that is of any value; and since they think they have a valuable collection of such works--the way to get better is very much obstructed. Somewhere in the country we ought to have a first class collection of numismatic works and I know of no other library so well able to acquire one as the Library of Congress. If there were one there an investigator could run down for a few days or, if that were impossible, he could borrow the books through his local library. With a little effort I believe we can shape their policy in that regard.

A little team work might get quick results, or at least some results. Suppose you write the Librarian and ask if there are in the library any of a number of standard works, as for instance Eckel, Cohen, Babelon, Friedlaender u. von Sallet, Garrucci, and any of the works dealing with Oriental coins; of course I do not mean for you to ask whether they have Mommsen himself, but Mommsen's work on Roman coinage!!!! Mommsen is dead!! And he is buried too; had he died in Philadelphia we would still have him among us in visible form, though he might be dead. That is the state of half this population. The next census should take the actual state of affiars, or rather of population here into account. I am letting this paragraph end wide the mark and in balderdash at that. But to return to the dominant chord-I hope you will write the L. of C., making however no reference to any scheme or to anything you may have heard about afforts to have their collection of books improved. Take it up with them de integro with all appearance of sincerity and sincere you can well be for you might at any time wish to make use of good works thay might get. In Boston you may have about all the reference books you need.

I'll remember your request anent the Lincoln Cent. There is a

lurking suspicion in Brenner's mind that the people here are not trying very hard to expedite the work, in fact that they seem to be inclined to let the work lag in some hope perhaps that now that a new man is crushing the chair in the White House this project may be allowed to drop. That is inter nos. Whether true or not I cannot say, but anyhow the piece is pretty apt to be coined and before very long too I think.

Do you ever see the Berliner Muenzblaetter? The last number contains a page article, editorial, on the new results of the recent competition for the model of the proposed 25-Pfennig piece. They too are having their troubles over a new coin.

If you'd like I'll translate the article and send it to you for the Numismatist. It would cover nearly two pages in the N.

I am glad to hear that Boston continues to prove her mundane stability and can keep her feet out of the sea. Perhaps I have not given her a square deal. I find consolation however in the revelation made here by one of your own citizens, who has a deal to do with Boston's finance, from which it appeared very clearly that Boston does not give herself a square deal. But I'll try to improve my conduct and hope that she will do the same.

If I thought that you were responsible for the English in that communication to the King of Italy I'd roast you alive here and now. It is a lot of fun to scorch you a little for you take it so sweetly. ¶¶¶ The man who wrote "du-ring" instead of dur-ing must have been just out of the Rathskeller; and how unpatriotic it was to write "states in the union" while honoring our northern neighbor, "the Dominion of Canada", with the badges of her individuality. It strikes me too that it would have shown a becoming modesty if that committee had felicitated themselves instead of the King for his distinguished services to numismatics; perhaps however His Royal Highness was made happy by this prompt appreciation of his humble efforts. If he was not, there is the consolation that he hardly knows enough English to perceive anything but the best of good intentions. That first paragraph runs like a rail fence through a tamarack swamp.

Now these animadversions are not to be passed around. A less perceptive mind or a more sensitive vanity than yours (and this is not flattery) might think unkindness into them; and I would not purposely injure any man's feelings. The average man is more sensitive about what he has written than ¶¶ is an old maid over the date of her birth. On that score I nearly lost my life the other day. A New England spinster on the way back from Washington where she had got caught in the blizzard mentioned the famous blizzard of 1888, and then also the famous cold New Years. One of the girls near by asked when it was and I replied that it was early in the '60's during the War. The other woman had just said that she remembered it well, and my remark struck the fire from her eyes. Only afterwards did I hear one of them call her Miss. Certainly that young girl had asked the question in pure mischief; and I looked an accusation at her too; but she only smiled and skipped out of the door.

Truly yours,

Louis Comfort Tiffany

My dear Wood:-Thank you for the coins. We are very much pleased to have them. It is very kind of you to remember so generously the pressing needs of your impoverished country. If the treasury deficit had been a hundred millions more during the last three years there is no telling what might have happened. Very likely the Senate would have put ten instead of four-and-a-half millions into an office building and installed aeroplane communication instead of the subway auto transit adopted. A treasury deficit is a great thing for the Senate. They get everybody else to retrench;retrench, retrench is the burden of their song "from till noon,from noon till dewy eve," and then--while the other fellow is running close under shore the patriotic senate spreads its full canvas and strikes for the cerulean blue of unobstructed expenditures--on itself only,of course.

I see no reason for you to make any apologies anent the English you wield.There is nothing wrong about it. You are right about the bad character of some of the lucubrations that appear in the Numismatist and if many copies find their way to foreign parts the A.N.A. is remiss if it fails to see to it that the Association is better represented. For as you know the type of English that appears in such a magazine proclaims the organization very much as his speech or table manners proclaims the gentleman or the fellow.

I believe that we ought to hammer away until in at least one or in many libraries of this country there will be found a good working library of numismatic books--whether a man's interests are amateur or scientific. So go after the L.of C..

Sincerely yours,

F. Brunsmatte

Philadelphia, Penna. March 29, 1909.

Dear Wood:-Here you are! Who "T." is not to be explained; the declaration of his identity, like his identity in relation to many things great and small, chiefly small, that appear in magazines and the press from time to time, is to be reserved till the coming of that happy time of Never, Nevermore.

You are quite welcome to shove your editorial pencil through any partof it or all of it, if it please your soul.

I am sorry that you cannot get drawings from those miserable engravings in the Blaetter. Your drawings are the best part of the Numismatist; so you see I mean the drawings would be desirable, not for the bum article exactly, but for the Numismatist

The L. of Congress has an offer of 15,000 volumes on numismatics by some dealer-in Europe I suppose. I am going down next week to inspect the card catalogue of it and give some idea of what is desirable to purchase. They will all be desirable-if there is any likelihood of getting them all purchased.

Truly yours,

T. L. Comparetti e.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

May 19,1909.

My dear Wood:-I do not know the address of the American Journal of Numismatics and wishing to com unicate with Dr.Marvin it occurred to me that I could do it best through you and incidentally bring up another matter in relation to that journal.

I have just discovered here in the Mint the files of that journal from I to XXIX inclusive,unbound and stuck away where one would not look for them. I had seen the bunnh of tied bundles before and was informed that they consisted of unbound volumes of the Report of the Director of the Mint,and as there was a full set of those Reports aleady on the shelves there was no use to hunt up others,and to open packages that were reeking with dust. Today I went into them and made the very pleasant discovery. Why in the world they were thus packed up and stacked away instead of having them bound is more than I can tell.

You will probably see Dr.Marvin before long and when you do I wish that you would ask him if he can supply the Mint with volumes XXX on to the end of the number issued;and also if he has No. 4 of Volume XXIX which I find is missing. Will you kindly request him to write me and name the price of the volumes desired?

I feel that we are not doing right by that publication. It is the one which alone has any international standing or rather is in the least recognized abroad and few if any of us pay any attention to making it what it ought to be. I feel decidedly guilty. The Numismatist is definitely a collectors' magazine and its chief field will always be in the interest of the collectors here at home;and so it ought to remain. There is not only room but a real need of such a publication. It is to this country what Spink's Circular is to England the Muenzblaetter,and Buchenau's Muenzfreunde are to Germany and so on. The Numismatist should be kept to that field,but the Journal we ought to improve and help out and try to make it more decidedly an organ of the best scientific work in numismatics in this country. Do you not think that we could do something for it?

I have neglected the Journal I regret to say but intend to make a change at once.

Were you in New York last Friday evening? I understand that several from out of the city were to be there. I had planned to be present. But the American Association of Museums was in session here last week and we men here in Philadelphia had a strenuous time of it,which in my case kept up until Saturday forenoon. I was very much disappointed for I had a speech that was ripe to rottenness;and then I wanted to make a communication anent the Mormon coin dies which have all come to light and have passed into public possession. It looks as if there were a hoodoo on my efforts to attend the meetings of that Club.Either I can not get over or else for some reason there seems to be no use in going. The next time I shall make no plans in advance and then perhaps I shall be able to reach there--when there will probably be nobody present.

Sincerely yours,

L. Comunetti

Philadelphia, Penna.
November 11, 1909.

My dear Wood:-Several days since I sent you an official acknowledgement of the oriental coins sent for the collection; for of course "to with them as I please" means always to put them into the Collection.

When that top-lofty communication was sent you I expected to get round to a personal letter to you within a day or so at the latest. But I failed in that by a good deal. You see I was out in the west for a day or so and returning found a lot of mail piled up on me, in addition to what had accumulated before I went and while I was preparing to go. I am never really conscious of earning my salary until I absent myself from my post for a few days and am then confronted with the accumulated work of several days.

Ever since my return I have been kept with my nose to the grind stone, as some of our quaint people say, trying to catch up with the procession.

I want to thnk you personally for remembering the Cabinet collection when you found yourself in possession of a number of duplicates that you could spare. Several of them will be real additions to the collection, that is, new additions; and all of them will be very welcome. This year I shall make another effort to get out a bulletin dealing with the activities, acquisitions, both purchases and gifts, of the Cabinet

for the year just past. In that way proper credit could be given to all donors of coins and medals and if I succeed you will certainly receive a very honorable mention. But I am not in the least sanguine about getting out such a publication. The wave of parcimony(?)that struck the Government departments along with the panic has spent itself chiefly on the item of printing and engraving,or rather it has tried to hint that feature of the governmental expenses; but like most other efforts at curtailing expenses has not made a 'blooming success'. Heretofore I have offered to furnish the material for such a work annually,and though there has been a kindly feeling toward me and always a disposition to carry out my suggestions yet the order to reduce printing bills has been to strong for me.

I see that the farmers have been after the public printery with their pitchforks,and also after the excessive use of the franking privilege enjoyed by four or five hundred gentlemen who pr or to securing congressional jobs were in many cases unable to earn as much for their annual keep as they now consume in franking trash. A few good swipes of the dungfork may bring expenses so far within the Government's revenues that there will be something for other purposes than congressional politics and political"pork". Let us hope so at least.

In a letter from Elder yesterday was a very curious remark,and which I do not understand at all. He speaks about the gentlemen of the Numismatic Club being ofended,or rather"might resent being referred to as the laity" I wonder if I have ever used the term over there in a way to make it appear as if I regarded them in that light. I have no recollection of so doing. I can hardly

think of myself making such a silly blunder; for blunder is what it would be to use such a term in that society so many of whose members have rather thin skins. Whatever I might think of their attainments I should certainly always aim to flatter them with expressions of high admiration for their numismatic attainments. They may refer to me as a layman and an amateur ad libitum--it will give no offense.

Confidentially I must tell you of the queer move of Higgins the last time I was over there, in September. He is studying Chinese, or says he is, and he brought with him to the meeting his Chinese grammar, and reader, and certain other elementary works, and right in the midst of the festivities hauled them out and began to display his progress in the laundryman's lingo. Of course I was amused, and I marvelled too, but neither in the manner he desired. I fear that "Higgins" bulks largely in his own view of the world and of its petty [illegible] of human atoms. That is a universal vice or virtue-just as you take it-but some of us can find times when, with the fear of ridicule to aids us, we can rise above it; our mistake consists chiefly in succumbing to the seductions of self-advertising at the wrong time.

By the way the Library of Congress informs me that it's now has a fine lot of numismatic works on its shelves. They have the files of nearly all the leading journals; some of them not quite complete, but the lacunae will be soon filled in. Many standard catalogues and similar source books are still lacking, but they are being sought and will be purchased at an early date. That's good news. Before very long you should be able to see what they have from the duplicate card catalogue in the Boston Library.

Nothing new here. Had a very pleasnt visit to Columbus

and Indianapolis. I still have a few loafing days to my credit and I hope to get up your way before they are spent.

With kindest regards, believe me,

Very cordially yours,

R. L. Confrancetta

P.S. No, we have no duplicate of The Kwan Yi Sung. C.

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

April 26,1910.

My dear Wood:

You must not take the delay in acknowledging your recent letter and the kindness of your comments on certain oriental coin denominations to mean lack of gratitude on my part. You would be far from the facts of the case. It was very kind of you and fully appreciated by me I assure you. The list might have been made very much longer but I had no right to expect that your patience was as long as the list could be made.

There is considerable stir in Philadelphia about patterns just now. It appears that Uncle Sam swooped down on one unwary dealer and seized his possessions of that sort and will now take the matter into court to prove that they are his. I now understand that he lays claim to all such productions in existence dated 1873 and after. So if you have any dated subsequently to that year you had better take them to your blacksmith and have him alter the dates; otherwise expect a visit from your uncle,and not your uncle William either. The attorneys claim that the Gov. has no case ; but they always say that when they want you to jump into a suit.

I have no inside knowledge of the facts or the merits of the matter and am not supposed to know anything about the matter, a supposition that proves to be true this time,as often; so of course this must be from somebody else if you chance to mention it to one that does not know thereof.

With kind regards, I am,

Very truly yours,

F. Kempshall

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

January 16, 1917.

Dear Wood:

The Chinese catalogues have just arrived, and I want to thank you ever so cordially for the work you did on them for me. I shall probably never become very proficient in oriental numismatics, but a few such helps as you have rendered these volumes will always constitute a powerful lure; in fact I feel myself strongly attracted toward the eastern coins, but I know that I must not permit it to get the mastery over me and thus further dissipate my efforts and absorb my time with the tedious efforts to master the elements of another set of coinages. I have done too much of that sort of thing since coming here and that explains why I have written so little. But I am now following a pretty definite program and that includes but little more new ground breaking(that is,breaking ground that is new to me) and then I shall devote myself solely to investigation and hope to finish some of the works that I have pursued far enough to know that results can be had from them.

You have doubtless had some communication in re the theft of coins from the Sforza palace in Milan, or at least have heard about it. And then too you have seen the statement from the German police concerning the enormous theft at Aachen. Do you not think that the lists of those thefts should be published in the Numismatist? Unless they are thrown into the melting pot, some of those pieces are almost certain to find their way into this country, and it behooves every man to do his utmost to run them down. The last century has witnessed entirely too many successful raids on public collections, and I'd like to see some of the guilty parties caught and made a terrible example of to any other intending thieves.

I am a bit sorry that the Five-eagle pieces got so prominently into the last number of the Numismatist. I now understand that they were not to be exhibited until a year after their return to the possession of the Government; but the understanding was not heeded by the authorities. When they placed on exhibition it was understood that nothing should be said about them; and that course has been strictly followed here in the Cabinet. No labels have been attached to the pieces and commentary on them is reduced to the irreducible minimum.

Of course the Numismatist had a perfect right to publish what it did. The pieces belong to the public and are on exhibition in a public place. So you must not think that I mean to criticise; but when Mr. Z. was here I mentioned the fact that we were not saying anything about them, and why; however I think I did not request him not to let anything into the Numismatist about them. No harm has been done so far, at least none to my knowledge; but one never knows when the end of such a thing will come. Please do not insert any explanations, or allusions to the plan of keeping silence about the pieces; as that would only serve to keep alive, even to arouse interest.

Again I want to thank you for the work done on the Chinese books.

Very sincerely Yours

D. L. Hoover

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

My dear Wood:

Here you are-the two lists of stolen plunder and a bit of introductory fustian. I do not agree with you-as usual you know; in fact I would not agree with you for a good deal, because you are always so pleasant in your disagreements; it is so pleasant you know to have a disagreement with someone who will not denounce you as a liar and a thief, or something equally dirty- about the Journal being the place for the announcement. The Numismatist is the place for it. The latter reaches more readers and especially more who are apt to buy stolen coins and also more who are not apt to hear of the thefts from other sources. However, put it in the Journal; I do not care where you put it. If it were a private effusion, I'd say chuck it into the wastebasket. But I think it well,if you do put it in the Journal, to strike off a sufficient number of reprints on calendar paper of the page or two and insert them as Beiblaetter in the Numismatist. Thus everybody will have the facts brought to their attention and also have the lists of desirables before them; for probably some of our American coin swappers would be glad to add to their collection "The only piece stolen from the Sforza xxkxxc palace and kept from the melting pot".

I am glad to hear some news, and among them of the good prospects for the Numismatist, and that Adams is about to issue his unexpurgated account of private coinages.

I spent New Year with Mitchelson and had a pretty slow time of it, thanks to the bad weather. That is a place where you are made mighty welcome, but it is pretty hard to find anything in common with those well meaning people-nicht wahr?

Very sincerely yours,

T. L. Comparette

Dear Wood:

Don't you want to do our interesting cause a good turn, one that might turn out far better than you at first could imagine?

You saw the account of the appearance of 1885 Trade Dollars, one of which was exhibited in Chicago the other evening. I understand that there are at least five of them now known; Forbe said here the other day that he had had one of them in his hand, so there can be no doubt of their existence. Why not write a letter to Washington, and preferably to Andrews, and ask for the records regarding those pieces, and in lieu of records request that the officials at the mint who of course made those dies, be asked to give out their information on the subject? If you write, put it briefly so that your letter will be sure of a careful reading, as they are very busy down there these days; but be careful to work in a review of the history of the case and a few hints besides.

Tell A. that your surprise at the appearance of 1884 Trades in proof, whose existence was not a matter of record, has now turned to astonishment over the cropping out of 1885 Trades, and furthermore rumor has it that specimens dated 1886 also exist, and probably of 1887; that the disconcerting thing about these rumors is that they usually prove to be

true. You know the engraver "explained" the 1884 Trades by saying that the dies according to custom had been made in 1883 in expectation of coining the piece, and then "sombody" (which was of course himself) struck a few pieces. But the existence of the 1885 proofs cannot be so easily explained. I do not believe that the whole story of the Trade dollars is out and some of the collectors are going to get a gulling if someone does not interest himself so far as to elicit the information about them. For obvious reasons I am not in a position to start the investigation; and besides when an outsider shows that he has information about some crookedness the subject always receives prompt attention, while they may tell a man in the service to shut his mouth. You know how it is.

I thought that I'd get an article ready for the next number of the Journal but I now see that it is out of the question. Thereafter I shall certainly be in position to furnish something for each issue for some time to come. There will be some reviews, one of which I hoped to get in for the next number and several articles of greater or less extent. But just now the powers that be, and which are hardly ordained of God I fear, have my neck in the yoke and are lashing me to beat the band and the d - l too.

If you do not care to hit the Ass is. Sec. of the Treas. on the above suggested theme, please let me know to that effect.

Very sincerely yours,

T. L. Comparette

Philadelphia, Penna.
March 6,1911.

Dear Wood:

Just a word tonight. I am over here at the mint to work; and have a fine case of headache to help make the evening pleasant and profitable.

In all that you say and hint and suggest anent the Journal I fully concur. While Marvin lives we should respect his efforts and ideals, and conduct the Journal along the lines he has developed.

It would be useless to make the old gentleman feel that he has been wrong on certain essential matters. Let him go to his grave feeling that he has accomplished something, that he has been following right principles.

But I shall write you more in detail within a few days. Just now in addition to the other extra work in hand I am preparing a lecture on the contemporaneous medallists to be delivered at the Academy of the Fine Arts here the latter part of this month.

Beldan was over here last Thursday and we talked Journal, but not to very much purpose I fear. I find it rather difficult to get B. down to serious matters. He pulls the conversation into details before one can get at an agreement on essential matters. Then I was in New York last

Saturday and out to the Amer. Society and while there for quite another purpose we again reverted to the Journal. There is one great field for the Journal and one which American collectors could take up with advantage, and that is South America. There is a lot of work on the coinages of those countries that could be done and it is a very appropriate field for us. We have neglected it entirely too much. I wonder what we could do to get some good men interested.

Oh, yes, there is a handle to my name. By hook or by crook I made a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Chicago a few years ago, but I never employ the Ph. D. except when abroad, or when I fall into the hands of the police. Germans respect one for the title and the policeman thinks it something horrible and lets a man go as soon as he gets a little tip. Don't add the letters if you think it will injure the Journal.

With kind regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

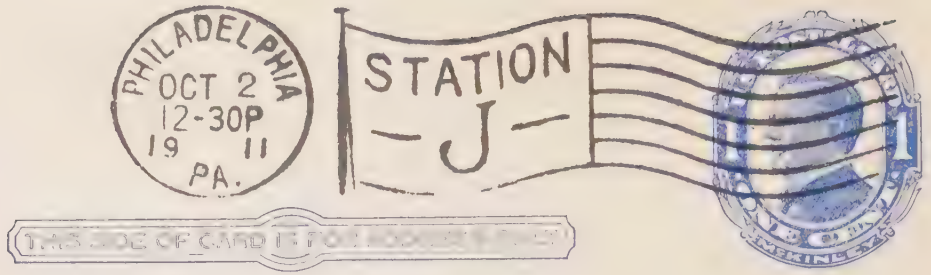
T. L. Comparette,

Phila. 10-1-'11.

My Dear Wood:- Yes, sir, so I understand, that our old friend, Uncle Joe, has gone; and I understand it the more clearly since I was there and assisted him into his final abiding place, helped to comfort the widow, etc. etc. Mr. J.C. Hills also took a hand in the same kind of ices, and Belden, Elder, and Adams were there to see that it was properly done. Poor Joe! He was a victim of too much smoke; let us hope that he will somehow be spared a little of its baneful influences in the world to which he has gone. A really good hearted man, who put his worst foot foremost, ass all discovered who took the trouble to get behind the somewhat repelling exterior to find the real man that was there.

Sincerely yours,

Very busy. Shall write you soon, T. L. Montgomerie



Mr. Howland Wood

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DEC HEN.

HELLO HENRY

WHY THERES HUR

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(I GET 1 DOLLAR)

I BOUGHT MYSELF FROM KYMAN M LAW BEFORE THE WAR OF 1812

MY FRIENDS I AM SATIRED!!!

LEON

BRAND

WOODIN

GRANDPA LING.

COIN BUG

I SHALL FEEL THIS TO DELEGATE WASHINGTON

DILLON

TOM ELDER

WHEN SHALL WE 2

MEET AGAIN

HENRY

ICED GOLD PAINT

I RESIGN

FOR PROXIES

THE KING OF ARMENIA

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THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

March 9, 1912.

Dear Wood:-

It has been so long since I heard from you that it almost seems as if the acquaintance had been cut. But if distance and long continued absence have done violence to the acquaintance, certainly they have not affected the friendship. For if you have been neglectful I love you still.- that's as much as your best girl ever says to you. I'll bet it's more. She'd never forgive you for being negligent.

I attended the meeting of the N.Y. Numismatic Society last evening and tho I could remain for only about half the session yet it was very enjoyable. They are wide-awake and doing something. Your half-sister, Frey, was there in all his activity, as were also many others. But Higgins was conspicuous for his absence. I made no inquiry, but wondered if he had grown cool.

Well the catalogue is dragging its lazy length along toward completion. It has been in the press for a long time. It went to the printer last July 10th. It has oozed along slowly, and is now promised for - sometime. It has been a hard task, and one which has placed me at every disadvantage. The preparation of the MSS. was hurried along in every way possible, then after it was done and in, the usual thing happened - no hurry was shown to get it out. I might just as well have had it under my care ofr two months or more, to correct and improve. The most of it went to the printer with little or no correction of the first draft. You know about what the result of such hurried work is bound to be; and you can also realize in a measure just how I now feel. The distress at sight of many of my mistakes, errors, blunders, and oversights is almost unbearable. It is enough to drive amx a man to drink or worse. Of course there is no use for a man to urge the shortness of time allowance for his shortcomings. The only thing for him to do is to sit in silence and bear as well as he can the anathemas that will be hurled at his work and himself. There is nothing else to do. For one cannot defend his faulty efforts. Were I to criticise it, and state all I know of its sins, no man would ever take it up without burning a rag under his nose.

But there is no use to wince over it now. After it is out, I'll send you a copy. Of course if I had had my way about it, I should have drafted about a half dozen of you sharks in various fields and made the work representative of our best efforts, and that is just what ought to have been done. But when with nearly every bunch of galleys there came a request from the Public Printer through the Director to "Please expedite the return of these galley sheets as much as possible", what could you do?

Too much importance to the effort should not be attached to the work. You know it was undertaken primarily as sort of inventory of the Collection for official uses, and has been extended to its present size of about 660 pages, where half that number, yes

a fourth of them, would have served the original purpose.

Do you never intend to come this way any more? Think of how long it has been since I looked upon your shining face!!

You seem to stick at home with the assiduity of a man who is trying to get himself engaged. Is that the explanation?
One of these days I purpose to challenge you to a matrimonial contest. But I'll wait until after the catalogue is issued. For then will be the time to decide whether she shall be a city or a rural girl. If I get fired, as in my own opinion I ought, then I'll want a country girl who knows how to make butter and raise chickens.

Let me hear from you when you have time to throw away in writing.

Sincerely yours,

T. L. Compareth

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

April 24, 1912.

Dear Wood:-

Your letter must have an immediate answer for several reasons. For one of them, you are the first, and up to date, the only man out of a score to whom I sent complimentary copies of the Cat. , who has acknowledged receipt of the copy. I had some anxiety about their safe delivery until I received your letter, for they were not as securely prepared for mailing as they should have been. Perhaps they were all so shocked at the outrageous work that they have not yet recovered breath to write or been able to frame up a note that would do the work without saying anything. However that may be, the fact still remains that many of our American collectors and coin enthusiasts are still in the buy and sell period of the subject and the receipt of a book, good or bad, does not have the same importance as the receipt of a copper Cent with one more or less berry on the wreath just opposite the letter E in ONE.

The vices of the volume will be as readily appreciated by yourself as they are by me, now that I am somewhat free from the task of "pushing the work through". And a number of things are altogether to my dislike, and distress me beyond measure. When I discovered what had been done, or allowed to slip my attention, in some parts of the work, my pulse almost stopped; for they are as idiotic and as indefensible as if I had attributed a U.S. Dollar to the Mulatto Republic of Hayti. But they must pass now; and as for myself, I must take the medicine of probably relentless criticism.

I hope that you will before long be confronted with a scareful Twenty Dol. and having nothing else to do, take train for the city of brotherly love, where every other man hates his neighbor, and the intervening man hates himself.

I wish, Wood, that you would at your early convenience take a good look at the Cat. and let me know just what you think of the thing in general. How about the plan of distribution? You see that I have distributed by denominations insofar as possible, following the distribution of metals. Does that strike you as less desirable than arrangement according to dates? Some of the men thought that the U.S. coins should be arranged according to dates. But I found that such a plan would necessitate cross references to places forty and fifty pages back in some cases. On the date plan, take for instance, the Half Dollar of 1891; you would have to refer to the change in 1866, which would take him back about 12 pages; there he would find himself referred back to the same place where the type was described, or about 15 pages further. You know how you dislike to be referred from place to another in a book. I had the MSS. of U.S. coins written out on that basis, and that was the insurmountable objection to the plan in my judgement. It is all right, where you have a sales catalogue, intended for persons who already know the

coins, and therefore just what types were used in any given year.

But such a Cat. xxxx as the one I tried to get out will be used more by the layman than by the collector; in fact it will have very little interest for the latter. Official instruction, which is referred to in the "Note" at the end of the volume, as well as my own feelings in the matter, prevented me from working it out on the lines of a sales catalogue, with regard to minute die varieties, condition etc. etc.

I should be mighty glad to get an opinion of the work based on the judgement, tho somewhat superficial because of hurried examination, of yourself and Marvin. Up to date I have never had a word of aid, suggestion, criticism, either in the preparation of the work or on its merits and vices since its appearance. There must be a lot of things which have escaped my eye or in which my judgement was all astray. So, please let me hear from you as soon as convenient, as I am anxious for something on the business, and I am ready to be commended or "cussed," therefore do not be afaraid to speak your mind.

With kind regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

F. L. Crompacelli

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

May 7, 1912.

My Dear Wood:-

It is some satisfaction to discover how you actually made blunders, when once you have discovered that you are guilty of a choice lot of them that have eluded your supposedly watchful eye. In the last number of the Numismatist you have read how I got caught through an incomplete set of Guide Cards in my card catalog.

But of all the shortcomings of that volume none has come so nearly breaking my heart as the foolish blunders on page 23. You of course have noticed them, and must have wondered a great deal how it could have been done. It was further aggravated to my mind, because both Hudson Chapman and Woodin had the copy of that page in their possession and I felt pretty certain that such blunders could not escape the eyes of all three. When Chapman had the copy in his hands - we were together - he discussed particularly the description given under No.2 and also the weight given; he felt sure that I must have made some mistake as he had never struck one that weighed over 65 grs. But my weight proved correct on making another draft.

Well, to make a long story short I have ferreted out my copy and the galley sheet, and this is what happened:

(last line of No.1)
"being plain. Size,18; wt.72 grs. Pl.I,1"

"2. AR.Shilling,1652. Obv. MASATHUSETS/. IN , between"

Thus you will see what I meant: The heavy line between No.1 and No.2, was meant to indicate the insertion of a 6-m dash, which I did not then know very well how to indicate; but an imperfectly erased semicolon had been inserted and I struck that out, or meant to do so only; my line touched the end of the dash line and made the whole thing look like a transposition direction; then, the deviltry started, it went its full course. Sombody, and I know who it was, supposed that if the words of the legend were wrong in the first (and also in the second, for a similar colon was there struck out)then they must be wrong in the other cases, and transposed the words in the remaining three instances. After the galley sheets had been passed my own work on the U.S. material really came to an end, for I had my hands full with details of the rest of the volume

Now, what do you think of that for luck!!! Of course I am to blame - cold type carries no excuses. It makes my blood run cold to think of it. I am now mighty sorry that I did not include the correction among those sent to the Numismatist; but I yielded to bad advice in the matter. It is done now; yet it is some satisfaction to discover some mitigation of the evil of slovenliness.

Those disproportionate monograms of POTOSI and LIMAE are no fault of mine. I railed at those repeatedly and until the last moment the printer repeated his promises to have new ones made that would "conform in size and line to the letters of the inscriptions in which they occur", and when at the very last he said it was impossible, I telephoned him that I had placed an order with a Philadelphia house to make a hundred of each, and that they would be in his office on the second day following, as they were making a special order of it. He simply replied "It is too late". My appeal to the Bureau came to nothing for he gave them the same answer.

That was my experience with a number of things. The copy was taken from me as fast as it could be hammered out, and in many cases without careful review by myself; and to my appeals to have somebody look over it for me, they were adamant. And it was entirely useless, for the copy was turned over to the printer on July 10th, and there it laid until in the fall. Isn't that enough to make a man feel like ---- voting for Roosevelt!!

Of course, you know, Wood, that it will hardly do to mention these matters of the course pursued by khm Washington in ramming me through; for they would rise up in arms, under the suspicion that I was trying to shift responsibility for bad work on to their shoulders. I am not trying to do that, in fact. They did make a tremendous mistake; they did not realize the extent of the work, nor the minute character of it; nor would they listen to reason.

There is a lot of work in the book, of which I feel just a little satisfaction, tho none may allow its good character. In the descriptions of U.S. coins, such anomolous terms as "Defiant eagle" etc. have given way to heraldically sound expressions like "Eagle with wings displayed-", and to describe the position of the wings as pointing upward or downward, "erect" and "inverted" are used, and those too are sound terms. Of course "Heraldic" eagle is not employed, as any eagle properly treated on a charge is a heraldic eagle.

In treating the coinages of Mexico and other countries to the south of us, I feel that I have made no mistake in giving a brief description of the national arms at the close of the brief introductory notes, then avoiding the repetition of the long descriptions of the arms when employed on the coins. The national arms of Mexco are well known to numismatists and historians, so why describe them often. I hesitated a little to treat the Mexican coins by periods instead of by mints, but I now believe it best, especially for such a fragmentary collection.

I wish you would look over some of the points mentioned and give me your opinion about them; for I am now preparing a guidebook of the collection, and shall employ some of these things, unless shown that they are wrong or injudicious.

Sincerely yours,

W. L. Comparette

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

May 13, 1912.

Dear Wood:-

Your letter is just at hand; and while I was in the act of getting ready to run over to the Univ. of Penna. Library to look up some material which I intend to employ in an article for the JOURNAL yet I feel that your kindly letter deserves immediate attention. You are certainly very considerate and very kindly and rest assured that I appreciate your remarks.

I wish that we could have an opportunity to talk over some of the things, and then you would get my point of view.

For instance, the MS. of the Mexican coins was written over three different times, and I held in my hand the three MSS. and finally sent in the one that seemed to those with whom I discussed the matter and myself as the best under the circumstances. I had it written out just as you suggest, and of course that was the natural and the first form of it. But note how fragmentary the collection is; take one of the mints, for instance, and take the case of the Tostons, and see where one would land if his arrangement were by mints. It would always be puzzling to discover just what the Collection had, or to verify anything one might wish to verify. It seemed to me best to render the actual contents of the collection as available as possible - as stated in the Note at the end of the volume. Let us understand each other: Your criticism is perfectly just and scientific. I may be all wrong; it was a case of bad judgement, if so. In the So.American coins, as you have noted I followed apparently a somewhat different scheme. What I did there was to avoid separating the coinages of the different Viceroyalties. Thus the coins of a King struck at Lima follow in succession, and the denominations are distributed among the mints, as in the case of Mexico, which are all in one Viceroyalty later republic.

What you say references to other works is decidedly pat. That is just what I wanted to do throughout, but did not have the works for many of the countries; and then, chiefly, it soon became a question, not of doing the work well and scientifically, but doing it somehow by the time the MS. was being demanded.

As to the brief introductory notes, I only wish they were fuller, more accurate, and more finished. They were knocked off in little over three days, all but the one to Brazil, which was written later but also very quickly. Washington had informed me that "nothing could be done on the work until all was in and the introductions must be in by Wednesday." That was on Saturday. The next morning, Sunday, at 7:30 I was at the typewriter here and by nine that night the sketch on the U.S. and colonies was out. You see that that makes twenty-two pages, and while it is common-place material, yet it is not copied, and such a piece of work is no mean job for a man whose ideas flow like mud, as mine do, slowly oozing out and taking form with the greatest difficulty. Often I stick a half-hour for a word or a phrase, and then very likely fail to

get it. The other sketches were ground out and went to Washington Wednesday morning. I think I wrote them Tuesday that the material would be forwarded that night and thus lulled them to sleep and then worked away at the job as long as I dared, before sending the MSS.

What you say about type, is just. I wanted Roman, smaller size; for the vast majority of coin legends are in Roman. But the office down there was under the influence of an English work in which that "hair line Gothic" was employed. The six-point star I especially desired because of the brief paragraph on the "Form of the Star" in the Introduction, but did not have the six-point star, and taking the position that the chief thing was to suggest that a star was meant, and that the form of the star was discused in the Introduction, they could not see any reason for going to the expense of making six-point stars.

You will see that I was up against something. As to the monograms of LIMAE and POTOSI, I think I told you that I offered to furnish them in proper size and form at my own expense, but even in that got turned down. I gave the order for them here, and wired Wash. to wait two days, but got back telegram "Too late".

The blunder about St. Lucia Central is good enough. I took it on authority.

I wish you would look carefully to the descriptions of the eagle on our American coins. Our much used terms, "Defiant eagle" and "Heraldic eagle", are hardly defensible. No work on heraldry that I have consulted, knows the term "Defiant eagle", while evry representation of the eagle in accordance with the rules of the herald's office is a heraldic eagle. Thus the displayed eagle, the rising eagle, and the eagle volant etc. are all heraldic, because known to the book of heraldry. A good authority says: An eagle perched, with expanded wings, is an eagle with wings displayed". That strikes me to suit in most cases the eagle on our coins. You will not that I have borrowed two terms from the descriptions of the eagle displayed, and ~~xxx~~ describe - eagle with wings displayed inverted; and eagle with wings displayed erect, accordingly as the wings are pointed down, as on on the last majority of the coins, or upward as on the last Dollar.

Did I mention this to you before? Perhaps so.

Your guess, that I took most pains with the U.S. coins ought to be correct, but the facts are that I left those chiefly to my assistant, Heek, after roughing out the MSS.; that is I left it to him to make sure that there were no omissions, that the legends etc. were correct. You more than any other American, will realize the amount of work in the section on Mexico and South America. And those took a lot of my time. How many times I got completely floored!! For instance I wrote to all the natural history museums to find out what animal that was ~~xxxxxx~~ supporting the left side of the shield on the arms of Chile, the guemal. They damned it everything imagina-

ble. The letters are worth preserving. The National museum put me on the undoubtedly right track. Tho my time was very brief, yet I did a lot of such things in a conscientious effort to do the thing right, until hurry-up letters became weekly affairs, then I got mad and rammed the job to completion as quickly as possible; and believe me, I was hot clear through.

I note what you say about alphabetical order of countries. That was another battle ground for a monamachia, if I may coin a word; for I had nobody to fight it out with. I am almost a convert to the arrangement of countries according to the principle of contiguity, rather than following the alphabet. The latter principle often throws countries far apart, whose coinages are closely related, either immediately, or indirectly through the natural approximation for commercial reasons. An alphabetical arrangement of the countries of So. America throws Argentina first, from the southern end of the continent, then Bolivia from the other end; it separates Columbia and Ecuador which once formed one country and whose coinages were always mutually influenced; again it injects the portuguese colony and country of Brazil into the Spanish countries, and I do not think that best; in Europe it would result in a regular durcheinander of Germanic, Slavic, and Latin countries whereas among the coinages of each group there is always a certain affinity.

Again, the great Eckhel followed the principle of contiguity in his work on Greek coins; and in his Antiken Muenzen of Italien Menardier, Berlin Museum, follows the same principle, and in the latter work especially there is not very good reason for not following the Alphabetical order.

Now, please do not consider this in the nature of an answer to your remarks on the subject. It is meant for no other purpose than to let you see that the subject was carefully considered along with hundreds of other similar ones, debated perforce alone, and settled in most cases with fear and trembling.

Now I msu run over to the Library and see if I cannot get the material for a brief squibb, at least, and try to get it off Monday.

With sincere appreciation of your very kindly spirit and gracious words, I am, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

P. L. Ormsbee

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

May 18,1912.

My Dear Wood:-

This paper should really go to the Journal of Philology, in so far as its contents might govern the place of publication; but charity ought to begin at home first - although it hardly ever does so. Furthermore, it would be no very bad thing if we could get a number of papers dealing with subjects of importance to the classical people. If nothing else it might serve to get the Journal on the list of magazines subscribed for by a larger number of the institutions.

As to the size of the Gothic type employed in the principal inscritpitons in the Catalogue, and their comparison with the type of the body of the work, at first I felt as you do; but on further examination of some recent works I am compelled to revise my feelings. For instance, the recently published "I Medaglioni Romani" by Gnecchi uses an even larger type for the purpose and with the same point type for the body. Their type is Roman instead of Gothic but it is a type of Roman that so closely resembles Gothic that an inexpert eye would at first pronounce it the same type as is used in the Cat.

About Tuesday you will receive a leaf bearing pages 23 and 24 which I want you to substitute for the one in the volume. It's a revision, but not to be mentioned. Will tell you further when the leaf is sent you.

Sincerely yours,

D. L. Couperith

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

May 22, 1912.

My Dear Wood:-

If you publish that squib of mine, please give it the caption:

Inaccurate Tables of Roman Coins in American Latin Grammars.

What do you know about the legend "I CUT MY WAY THROUGH" on the Higley tokens? Has anybody suggested that the first two words might be a play upon the last two syllables of the State name Connect-I-CUT? I have found nothing pointing to that explanation, but so apparent is it that such was the origin of the legend, that certainly somebody has pointed it out.

Nothing of it in Crosby's "Early Coins".

Sincerely yours,

J. L. Coughlin

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

June 4, 1912.

Dear Wood:-

Your letter at hand and the inclosed rubbings of gates of Chinese coins. What you say about the use of certain terms quite meets my own approval. There is no escape from the fact that we have been very careless with our terminology over here, and we ought to welcome every bit of reform that comes down the pike

As to articles on ancients I am not in position to promise just now. The first two articles in the last Number of the Numismatic Chronicle have cut me up pretty badly. Seltman and Evans have treated the same subjects precisely that I was working on, but they have handled all my material, and brought out certain of my conclusions; and it would be impossible for me to go ahead and publish now, for I should certainly incur the charge of filching matter from published articles. For the last three years I have been working on the coins of Magna Graecia, with the view to publish finally a popular work on those fine coinages, and had been working on one or two papers as results of my Vorstudien. Evans has certainly knocked the chief of Vorstudium "into a cocked hat".

Another subject on which I have been at work for some time will hardly be anticipated. How much of a paper will result, I know not. I expect to have it ready by fall. It will deal with Roman matters and will have a distinct and permanent value for Roman topography, if my present convictions prove correct.

If I had my own way in the matter I'd certainly secure the gates of Chinese coins you have. They would be interesting; but I doubt if I can get authority to purchase them. We have a female Irishman as Assistant Director of the mint; and now if you know anything about a woman's desire, when possessed of a little power, to extend it as far and in as many directions as possible, then you can understand just what I am up against. The female Irishman has procured from the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury an order that before we can purchase a coin fro the Cabinet, we must first submit to Washington the list of the coins and prices!! They know nothing whatever about coins, yet would attempt to pass upon our purchases!! Repeatedly I have had good chances to buy desirable pieces at a bargain, but the time required to reel off the red-tape robbed me of the chance.

This is not due to any fault that has ever been found with my purchasing; in fact last year they praised my bargains highly. It is just the woman's itching desire to have power, and then plaintively bemoan to her sympathetic friends her extended and onerous duties - any woman's desire, I mean; not particularly that of our female Irishman.

Take this from me - never allow yourself to be lured into a government job, so long as you can raise onions, run errands, work life insurance, or work your friends or beat your enemies. Government

work is all right if you have the hide of a walrus, the invulnerable feelings of an ass, and a hungry cur's readiness to "go along" and take whatever an officious "confidential clerk" of an over trustful official may be disposed to hand out to you.

I shall see what they say to the purchase of the gates; but I expect a prompt turn-down on such a proposition, as they would never in the world understand the meaning of them. Repeatedly I have tried to get samples of our coinage in various stages of manufacture, but without success up to date.

I am soon to have another wall case, in which I shall install some bills; glad to get it. Have long worked for it, or them.

I fear there is but little reason to be found in the treatment of the stars and clouds on American coins. I have often tried to elicit some explanation of some of the things they had done from the men in the Engraving department, but they never seem to have the least notion of a reason for what they had put together. I understand that the arch or canopy of clouds was omitted from the design of the Half-dollar et al. of 1892, simply at the suggestion of some congressman. The first patterns included the clouds. An effort to rationalize those designs would almost certainly lead the writer into ridiculous positions.

Have you any notion of attending the Earle sale? I hardly expect you will be here, but I wish you were coming. For I am planning to give a little dinner - not much of a dinner, just some mush and milk, an onion sandwich, and a stein of beer - and bring together some of the more desirable Philadelphia collectors and a number of the same sort of out-of-the-city men. I should be mighty glad to have you with us, and when I find that the men I want will be here, or at least some of them, I shall send out some invitations, including yourself; in fact you may consider yourself already invited; the date I do not yet know myself.

Had I imagined that I was going to write so much I should have taken a second sheet.

Sincerely yours,

D. L. Bompaette,

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

November 23, 1912.

Dear Wood:

I am sending the inclosed to you, to read and state if you think it worth while to print it in the Journal. Two things must be considered - the rather late date for it and the merit of the substance. As to the former I note that a review of the same work has just appeared in the last number of the Zeitschrift.

As to the merit, that is not for me to discuss. The observations are entirely independent, and so far there is a reason for saying them.

I am planning to have something for the Journal right along from this time forth.

Please explain to Dr. Marvin that no discourtesy is meant in not forwarding the paper to him direct. I wanted you to read it, and he would also without doubt; and it is sent you to facilitate matters.

How are the beans these fine days? The scrapple is fine, and would be finer if we did not have July weather.

Harry is in Europe and writes back that he captured a lot of fine Greeks in the Munich sale of Sicilian pieces Aus Altem Besitz. The American market is already overstocked, in consequence of the Earle sale.

With kind regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

D. L. Couchanelle

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

December 13, 1912.

Lieber Herr Wood:-

Several days since I sent you a short book review for the Journal; which you were to look over and then pass on to Dr. Marvin. From neither of you have I received notice of the arrival of the enormously important document. Perhaps it is a case of "thought the other would"; maybe it is a case of disinclination to "break the news to him" of the rejection of his effusion, or possibly the contents of the paper have so"balled you both up" that you had to take a long vacation - but I'll not multiply possibilities, they are so numerous.

You may not have agreed with me as to either the suitability of the contents of that scrap, or the timliness of it; in which case I'd be very much inclined to agree with you. Seldom can I see very much worth while in what I get out. But somehow that set of books ought to become better known to American collectors, both as to its existence and as to the organization of its contents. That was the reason for the scribbling.

So,let me know if you got the paper; and also your judgement of the advisibility of the whole thing.

How are you these fine fall days; or are they not fine up your way? Everything numismatic is very quiet down this way. Harry is on his way back from Europe, whither he went to buy himself rich at the Munich and Vienna sales; Woodin was over the other eveing and we dined together, went to a leg-show afterwards; Elder has bought a lot of old gold coins from the U.S. and says he got stuck on it; have not seen Clapp for several months, and rumor has it that he is about to quit single life - only a rumor I hope; have you seen Higgins's book on the mystery of the Seven Devils and then some? I do not recall the title, but know it is something dreadful - epoch-making, too, incidentally. This is all I know, and more too.

With kind regards, I am, believe me,

Very truly yours,

D. L. Consaratte

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

December 17th, 1912.

Dear Wood:-

It is always a pleasure to receive a letter from you, and your last was in many ways specially acceptable. On so many subjects I find that we have very similar views; and perhaps that has something to do with it.

I was sorry to learn about the intentions in re the Journal. It is, as you state, a mistake and one from which they will retreat in a very few years.

It leaves us somewhat in the lurch; for now there is no really proper medium for much that ought to be published. The careful reviews of serious books ought to be one of the chief lines of literary activity in this country just now in the field of numismatics. That is the best way to cultivate serious interest in a subject. I wonder if it is proposed to include reviews in the new annual volume.

Yes, send the review of the B.M.Cat. to the Numismatist, if you'd like, and if you think it worth the postage. It will be a little out of place in that publication which is very largely a trade journal in the field of Americana.

Last night I heard a paper on Roman coins by one of our Phila. Collectors. I wish you could have heard it. It was rich, like the reader. Poor fellow! He knew not what he did, and of course nobody could discuss it with him nor after the reading of it. It went far to show that the local interest is more successful materially than scholarly. Yet Phila. has one of the most intelligent collectors in the country. He has acquired a lot of beautiful Greek and Romans and he knows them and the conditions both historically, economically, and artistic, that produced them. When you happen down this way again, you must visit him and see his coins, and get acquainted. For while his coins and other treasures are most interesting, he himself is more interesting than either - so you see he is a rare man

A merry Christmas to you, and also a Happy New Year.

Very sincerely yours,

F. D. Comfort

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

February 3, 1913.

My Dear Wood: -

Is it possible to secure in this country copies of the Manuals of Far Eastern Numismatics by Ramsden, referred to by you in the Journal, p. 152, 1912? Or must send to Japan for them? If you have any extra copies, or if you knowx of a dealer right at hand who has them, please forward me the two pamphlets and send the bill. I have special use for them right straight off!!

What's new in Boston land? I know of nothing that can answer to the predication of now here. It is the same old things in the same old way. Harry is skinning them with the same old dull knife he has used for the last thirty years, and some of them he is skinning good and proper. He will soon have my aged friend Bement ready for the spit and burning coals.

Was informed from Washington the other day that the first edition of the Cat. was exhausted, and a small edition would be soon struck off. I sent in some corrections, and revisions but do not know that they will be made. Have received no proof-sheets up to date, and they went down just a week ago today.

The dies are ready for the new Nickel, but there seems to be some hitch over the order to coin; the trouble appears to be with the slot-machine men. The new coin makes some changes in the thickness of the coin in certain parts of the field, which affects the operation of ~~tha~~ certain classes of slot machines. Such is the rumor, unconfirmed officially. The coin will cause a howl to rise among the masses. It is too wide a departurexto ~~tha~~ from the thing they are accustomed to handing out for their beer and Cinco cigars; and that is enough to turn them into critics. I make no comment on thexx piece myself

Our flighty friend Elder is now a Sunday resident of Phila. preparatory to getting into the divorce courts and out again entirely free; which he cannot do over in New York. Moral: Beware, she's fooling you -- else you are fooling yourself.

Somebody reports that Clapp is about to get married. But I do not believe the rumor. He is too level-headed for that.

With kind regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours

A. L. Comparetti

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

February 5, 1913.

Dear Wood: -

Willkommen! Willkommen! Herr Wood, into formal colleagueship. It is fine, indeed. Certainly it will be a great pleasure to work in cooperation with you, and together I believe that we can accomplish something for the general subject in this country.

I knew that they were gunning for a man over there and I have been interested in hearing what would be the outcome of their efforts, and what sort of a man they would select or be able to get. I am entirely delighted with the results. I never dreamed that your services could be had. Our dreams are not always dependable.

I shall always envy you your freedom from restrictive laws and harrassing politics; and, above all, your access to a really fine library of numismatic books. As soon as possible we must get together and have a jollification and love-feast.

Very sincerely yours

F. L. Comparette

Philadelphia, Penna.
May 27, 1913.

My Dear Wood: -

Oh, you prestidigitator! You monstrous magician in money and matrimony! Are you utterly insatiable? Yesterday a fat business man; today an exalted archaeologist; tomorrow you vow to become a Benedict. One gets dizzy keeping track of you! Here I had accepted you into the membership of sane bachelors, had come to regard your heart as case-hardened sufficiently to withstand impact of tender emotions; and now you swear you will just go and have it done. Well, I have nothing to say; I am dumfounded.

The fact is that I did have something to say, and it was pretty severe too, when I began to write this letter, but Barber the bum engraver has just been here and talked with me for half an hour and emptied my mind of everything it held - so disgusted was I with his title- tattle and bored by his unwelcome stay.

Thanks for that advice about a hurry-up marriage. I'll wait a year and then send to you for further approval and your counter signature; if it be then forthcoming, I take it - maybe. But I'll give you a year to revise or retract it.

The medals in question were not genuine; but they are doubtless reproductions of medals that are genuine.

Thanks for your effort to aid me, just the same.

I might write you some news, but I shall have to wait until I recover my equilibrium after the news you have sent me. It is smashing. But just as if you were going off on any other long journey, over dubious roads, beset by robbers and every other sort of rogues that lie in wait for man to lighter his purse and burden his heart, I will wish you a cordial farewell and a more hearty bon voyage, and express the hope that you will find the transportation tolerable.

Congratulations, old boy.

Very sincerely yours

F. L. Pollitt

October 8th, 1913.

Dr. T. L. Comparette, Curator,
United States Mint,
Philadelphia.

Dear Comparette:-

As you may know I have been more or less the American agent for H. A. Ramsden, of the Jun Kobayagawa Company.

The above remarks explain why I am writing to you. Ramsden, in a letter to me recently received, stated he sent some books and coins to you in March, and wanted to know what I would advise his doing, as he did not want to appear to hurry you unduly. I wrote him I would write you, and I thought that would be sufficient. Now don't worry the poor man too much. Don't string him along in this ungrateful way. Come right out, and tell him you don't want his stuff, or if it is the fault of Uncle Sam tell him plainly that they take a long time in paying their bills, and that you can do nothing in the meantime.

Very truly,

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

October 13, 1913.

Dear Wood: -

Just back from a brief vacation and find your letter relating to Ramsden's bill. That was delayed for a mighty long time, but the office informs me that the P.O.M.C. was forwarded some weeks ago; so I suspect that his letter to you was just about getting out of Japan when ours was landing. We had to have it billed in through a dummy and then forwarded. In fact the matter laid overlooked for a long time, and then I got busy and pushed it through. He must have left long before this.

Thank you, indeed, for calling my attention to it for Ramsden. It was Gov. business, so nothing delicate.

On my return I find Sawyer's Indians, which I am glad to have. They will make an attractive case.

I am sorry about that muss in the A.N.A. in re the presidency. Why any man should covet such an office is a mystery to me; it is an honor to be accepted as such, and not a prize to be sued for. I personally should be glad to see it become a fixed maxim of the association that ambitious candidates should be brushed aside.

Sincerely yours

R. L. Comparette

THE MINT OF THE UNITED STATES AT PHILADELPHIA,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

Dear Wood:

Again I have sinned! More than a week has passed since I received the books from you. It has seemed next to impossible to remember my duty to prepare them for expressing. For the last t three days I have told Meek to remind me of them, and he has forgotten to do so when we returned here and they went entirely out of mind when I got back to the mint. You see I am working overtime, night and day, and my wits have all been burrowed out of me.

But now I am sending them to you, and hope they will reach you in good order. I am also including in the package some works that belong to the mint, works of whose value I have no notion, and of which you probably know. I am sending them to you with the request that you do some indexing for me, if you have the time and inclination. (That is no allusion to Henessy's reply to Mrs. Murphy that he had the inclination but not the time). Wont you be so good as to place the names of the emperors over the various types illustrated in the work, or rather under the illustration?

With that guidance I shall be able to do something with Chinese coins, provided the work includes a fairly comprehensive survey of the types of the various emperors.

The paper is perhaps too soft to admit the use of a pen; so if you have no chop stick please make use of an indelible pencil. But such details are left to you--if indeed you find time and convenience to do the work at all.

I fear, old boy, that you are gradually pulling me into the maelstrom of oriental numismatics. There is something fascinating about them. Is it the eternal mystery of the Orient? But I do not want to get into it. I want to do some work on other lines.

You have not told me how to describe certain American coins, or where to find a description of them. Did you think I meant that as a flippant fling at the workmen who have gone before? Not in the least. Honestly I should like to know who if anybody has ever put his hand to the task of carefully describing them. Of course we all know of the sales catalogues; and they meet, some of them, admirably the purpose for which they were intended. How many of them would you care to affix your name and stand sponsor for the English, for the phrasing, for the archaeology of them? On the last subject I have sometimes been almost in despair. And the engravers here cannot help me out in the least. They do not know in half the cases the sort of thing they have modelled. They cannot tell me for the life of them whether in a given case they meant a ribbon or a scroll, a band or a fillet only, and so on in so many cases. How would you designate the eagle on our coins? Would you use "defiant eagle" as so often occurs in the sale catalogues? I am employing the term "spread-eagle", a technical term of recognized standing. Then I am at a loss whether to designate the beast as "with wings pointing downwards" and "with wings pointing downwards" or to dub him just spread-eagle and let him fly. What think you?

Sincerely yours,

T. Louis Bonfiglio

My dear Wood:

I have just received your letter, as I also received a few days since a copy of the A.N.A. Year-Book , and will take occasion now to thank you for the former, and express my appreciation of the care you have taken in re the catalogue. I am inclined to adopt the plan which you also thought best, namely the grouping of the coins according to date, arranging the metals thereunder. You know our coinage is so simple, our history so brief, that except for purposes of comparison it can have very little historical value, and that value is for the financier chiefly, and its further value is for the school in which some attention is now given to the coinage of the country in the primary grades. It comes in to a very small extent in the elementary work in history and civics done orally.

Now as to the nature of the proposed catalogue.

The original order was for " a list of the coins" and the suggestion made that the small pamphlet published by the American Society for use as a guide to the COINS for visitors to the International Exhibition of Metallic Art be used as a model for the work!!!! I was aske how long it would require to prepare such a"list" and I replied with contemptuous intentions- about three or four weeks. That thing you know is a bare list of dates and denominations, with seldom more than one line devoted to a coin. To my amazement the work was ordered done and ordered done by the 1st of July, in about five

weeks time!!! Knowing my man I did not try to explain, nor argue. I let go on home to Washington.

But recently I wrote him, and explained the sort of work that pamphlet was, and also set forth the sort of catalogue I thought we ought to get out--one that in the case of the U.S. coins and medals at least would be thorough-going and authoritative, and also that the work on the coinages of the western hemisphere should all be carefully done. No answer! In the first part of August he wrote up here wanting to know why the MS. was not ready; later, another letter came stating that he thought the thing had hung fire for a long time. Now wouldn't that cork you!!

Well I rammed ahead making a beast of a job of it, to rush the copy in; for copy was all he seemed to desire and without regard to the nature of the work.

After a while I balked and turned back and began to repair some of the rotten work and try to put it into such shape as avoid evident discredit to myself and the Government. I shall be able to improve it much but not to put it into the shape I should like. In order to gain as much as I have, I have worked every night and every Sunday since early in July.

I have a pile of manuscript here a half larger than the Webster International Dictionary- that is, thicker in MS. form, and it will make two rather substantial volumes. I hope, however that only one of them will be published. There is no need for the other.

But it will not be a catalogue raisonné as you suggest; a statement that hardly needs to be made after the above detail of facts. It would require a lot of time and also a lot of space for the running commentray and incidental history you mention; and I do not believe that I can agree that such a running commentray ought to be incorporated into the body of such

a work. I should favor however a generous prolegomena with more than a brief sketch of the main facts of the history of of our coinage. As to the interpretative matter in re the elements of the types, there too I should be inclined to lock horns with you. I do not regard a catalogue as a text-book, but first a brief but adequate account of the objects in a museum with sufficient description to identify them beyond the possibility of confusion, and with barely enough comment to render the material available for the use of investigators, and for that class of useful jackasses that feels it their duty to write text-books for others, including the schools. Thus you see if the catalogue which is in course of preparation is ever brought from the Government printing presses, it will suit neither you nor me, and it will barely suit any proper purpose, I fear. It will be if I am let alone a little while longer, a fairly accurate description of what we have. That will be something.

Did anybody ever publish the U.S. coins? I cannot think of a single published catalogue of them outside the work of the coin-dealers; and a few of but slight more value. Where would you refer some scholarly foreigner for the best available description of the U.S. coins? Take the phraseology of that branch of American archaeology: who has ever given it any real character and definiteness? I am asking these questions in all seriousness. Perhaps you can refer me to some work that will answer them. How would you for example describe the various eagles on the dollar, so as to be brief, concise, yet accurate? I'd be very glad to see how you would distinguish those for the dollars of 1794, 1840, and on the last issue. Then again how would you describe the reverse of the Double-eagle of 1849? There are descriptions of it; to which and to

how many of them would you willingly put your name? If you will go into this subject you will see what has been harassing me more or less for some months past- unless you can lay hands on a publication unknown to me.

I shall forward the MSS. of Chinese coins soon or within the time you indicated for me to use it which will be today or tomorrow, I believe. I have been so occupied with other things that I have not been able to make much use of it, but took the time yesterday to work out a lot of things and shall try to get along with the rest when I come to work them over, which will be later by some weeks I hope.

All that I have said above in regard to the pot-boiler of a catalogue is confidential. You know how it would be intepreted in Washington- namely that I had gone to outsiders with a tale of woe, etc etc. The re-appointement of Roberts changes the complexion of things a whole lot but it is too late now to amend much, without doing the whole job over again and postponing the completion of the MS. for months.

Very sincerely yours,

F. L. Comparetti

My dear Wood:

Your letter and the express package came to hand and I cannot tell you how glad I am to have both. It is most kind of you to give me this assistance and it is very fully appreciated I assure you . But more than that I esteem the personal touch with the men who are really doing something besides swapping coins, among whom (without flattery) my Brookline friend stands easily chief. This manuscript work of your is a mighty fine piece of craftmansship and scholarship as well. It will be a real pleausre to make use of it for a day or so. I find that I was on the right line, and that is some satisfaction, but the line had not been pursued very far.

The Chinese coins in the Cabinet were procured evidently from some Oriental, who prepared a catalogue of them, and that document came along with the coins and amulets; but how far it is trustworthy that has been the question. I am inclined just now to believe that the man knew the subject and that he made a trustworthy catalogue of the specimens in the collaection, but I do not propose to accpet his statements without careful examination and proof.

Now never mind about those Fifties,old boy; tho I agree with you in the main that it is rather a raw procedure for the Government to swoop down on a defellow and grab the belongings in which he has been in peaceful possession for some time. But circumstances alter cases. In this case, as I understand the matter, the

real sufferer is a former mint official. And his loss is akin to the paper losses on the stock market; when a fellow pats himself over a five point rise on his holdings, swears that he will hold on until he gets a twenty-five point advance, and then one evening picks up his paper and reads-"WIDE SLUMP IN SECURITIES" and discovers that his specialty has eased seven points and saddled a loss upon him. As I understand it the former mint official had to refund the $20,000 to avoid embarrassment of a more serious kind. His only loss, since he got the pieces at bullion value, was for whatever needless luxuries he may have indulged in after making such a good sale of his shadily got rarities. If he bought a pearl necklace for his wife, or a limousine car, or took a trip to Europe, things he would not have indulged in otherwise, then he may feel that he has been hit.

If Hazeltine had to surrender his commissions then he too feels a thwack; if he didn't, so much the worse for the former mint official.

As to Wo odin, I should not be surprised if he was perfectly satisfied to have the deal undone in that forcible way; for you readily see that he must have stood to lose at least $10,000. For who would ever give more for the pieces; or so much? I know that he was rather sick of his bargain soon after he made it.

Now all this is strictly confidential. The course of the Treasury Department is to give out nothing about the matter; and I am telling you what I have learned about it as a personal favor--if you so consider it; if it be interesting to you. In fact all my own information is really second hand? I have had nothing official on the subject and have not sought anything, preferring to have no communication on a subject the Department held taboo.

Your communication about the Numismatists is very interesting. I am willing to help with it now; I am willing to do some writing for it, if the editors should like anything from me, provided it be kept out of the political pot, that is A.N.A. politics. Who will edit and publish the thing?

Giv me your views on how you would publish the United States coins. You know how monotonous the coinage is, running the same thing for decades, and the same types for many denominations. At a man's best any publication of them would present a very monotonous record, and very unattractive page, or rather many pages. The chief point is, would you separate the denominations, or would you group them by years? The former is the accepted plan of the trained numismatist; but the latter is not without value especially for a coinage that has no great historical interest; and moreover for one that will appeal most to general readers or rather perhaps to a few financial men, and to school people. For example which of the inclosed pages would you prefer for our own coins? I'd like an expression of your opinion as soon as you find to time to give it briefly. We are about to publish the U.S. coins in the Cabinet and also the medals and coins of Mexico, and the countries to the south. Later we may follow it up with a publication of the rest of the Collection.

In the case of the coins of the U.S., of Mexico, and several South American countries, I am in a great quandry to know whether to follow traditional plans, or some other.

In the case of the U.S. coins and for others than collectors and numismatists, it is not a bad thing to have before one at a glance the full list of the denominations issued in any given year.

A letter from Uncle Joe this morning. As soon as I can get loose that is the way I am going to line out; and I hope to get as far as Boston. He wants me to visit hem Thanksgiving but that date is reserved for my mother, in old Ohio.

Very sincerely yours,

T. L. Comparette